Peerless Saw

Ohio Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Lean Manufacturing Assessment Increases Capacity At Peerless Saw

Client Profile:
Peerless Saw was founded in 1931 to produce woodcutting band saws for the Ford Motor Company, in addition to solid-tooth circular saws for both consumer and industrial applications. Today Peerless Saw manufactures industrial saw blade blanks and performs contract laser cutting for a variety of customers. The company's specialty is precision cutting of flat, hardened material. With the help of less than 100 employees, Peerless Saw produces approximately 160,000 saw blades per year at its location in Groveport, Ohio.

Situation:
Approximately 50 percent of Peerless Saw's blades are larger, made-to-order products. The remaining products range from 5 to 17 inches. Although the typical customer order is only 10 to 15 pieces per order, the larger saw blanks are produced in batches. A large quantity of in-process inventory results from the way blanks are cut and the way heat-treating is accomplished. Batch runs also decrease capacity and increase lead times up to five weeks.
Peerless Saw needed an outside eye to evaluate its operations to identify waste and non-value-added activities. The company partnered with the Columbus-based Manufacturing Resource Office (MRO) of TechSolve, a NIST MEP network affiliate, to lead it through the value stream mapping process (a lean manufacturing practice).

Solution:
MRO and Peerless Saw targeted the company's primary product, the large saw blanks sold to industrial blade manufacturing companies. Using the value stream mapping process, MRO led Peerless Saw employees through a careful analysis of each activity associated with the production of this product. The resulting analysis from the day-long assessment was used to identify several opportunities for improvement.
At MRO's suggestion, the company decided to eliminate its traditional method of batch processing to bring delivery lead-time closer to actual cycle time, thereby increasing overall capacity and reducing inventory. Peerless Saw also made the decision to implement six-sigma process control techniques to help reduce handwork. The company also opted to use kaizan techniques to lower selected individual process cycle times in order to improve delivery lead-time. When Peerless Saw completes the implementation of all these projects, it expects overall capacity to increase by 10 percent and in-process

inventory reductions of 10 to 15 percent.

Results:
Conducted a one-day assessment of business operations.
Selected several strategic projects to initiate change.
Anticipating 10 percent increase in overall capacity.
Anticipating 10 to 15 percent reduction in inventory.

Testimonial:
"The Manufacturing Resource Office provides an invaluable service and we intend to use them again in the future."

Joe Miller, Plant Manager